

3-18-2008

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### Recommended Citation

Mantz, Erika, "Uzbekistan Officials Come To NH For Dialogue On Emergency Planning" (2008). *UNH Today*. 384.  
<https://scholars.unh.edu/news/384>

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## Uzbekistan Officials Come To NH For Dialogue On Emergency Planning

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March 18, 2008

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MANCHESTER, N.H.- While the United States is making significant efforts to plant the seeds of democracy in Iraq, Afghanistan and other former authoritarian regimes in far away places, a separate but parallel nation strengthening effort is taking place in New Hampshire with the Republic of Uzbekistan.

From March 22-29, 2008, under a program called Partners for Peace - New Hampshire 2008, a delegation of 12 civil and military leaders from Uzbekistan will participate in a democracy education initiative and workshops throughout the state. Heading up the Uzbekistan delegation is R.D. Khodjaev, lead inspector of the National Security Council for the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The topic of discussion is emergency planning and response in the event of a natural disaster, according to program organizer George Bruno, managing director of USA Group International, a Manchester based international consulting company.

The program is a joint undertaking by the University of New Hampshire, the N.H. National Guard, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to demonstrate to leaders of countries in transition to democracy New Hampshire's unique approach of how government, non-profit organizations and the private sector respond and cooperate in the event of a hurricane, flood, forest fire or other sudden natural emergencies. "The rapid and professional response to flooding in New Hampshire provides good material for the workshops," said Bruno.

Uzbekistan was part of the former Soviet Union and became independent in 1991.

"It is a democracy strengthening program," said program sponsor Ted Howard, co-director of UNH-Partners for Peace and professor at UNH, "and we are grateful for the leaders and organizations throughout the state who have volunteered to be part of the program." The workshop portions will be conducted at the campuses of UNH in Durham and Manchester and will include presentations about UNH emergency procedures.

The delegation will also observe the NH General Court in action, be briefed on New Hampshire's emergency response plans by state officials and leaders of the N.H. National Guard, meet with Manchester Mayor Frank Guinta, speak to local firefighters, consult with UNH experts, and walk parts of the Freedom Trail in Boston. A visit to a Manchester Monarch's game is also slated, courtesy of KeySpan.

The program, conducted in Russian and English, is now in its seventh year with prior delegations coming from Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Tajikistan, Latvia, Kazakhstan, Russia and Belarus. For more information contact George Bruno at (603) 296-2222 or Ted Howard at (603) 862-2700.

